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SUBJECT: A/S HOOK'S MEETING WITH UNESCO DIRECTOR GENERAL

Classified by Ambassador Louise V. Oliver for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: DG Matsuura called for vigilance by Member States regarding UNESCO's future, to lock in the gains made during his tenure. He also expressed appreciation for the U.S.'s role in literacy efforts, and was pleased Mrs. Bush would continue her work for UNESCO beyond January 2009. End summary.

¶2. (C) IO Assistant Secretary Brian Hook met UNESCO's Director General Koichiro Matsuura on 11 December 2008 at UNESCO headquarters. Ambassador Oliver joined the meeting, along with Mission staffer Ostroff IO special assistant McLinn as notetakers.

¶3. (C) DG Matsuura began by saying how pleased he was that Mrs. Bush would be able to continue her work as UNESCO's Honorary Ambassador for the United Nations Decade of Literacy. The DG then mentioned that he would be inviting Mrs. Bush to attend a high level consultative meeting on literacy at UNESCO on 26 January 2009. He asked A/S Hook to thank Mrs. Bush for her decision to create a literacy fund at UNESCO, an initiative which would continue after President Bush leaves office.

¶4. (C) A/S Hook complimented the DG on the many positive steps he had taken in furthering the UNTAI initiative, by instituting important management reforms at UNESCO.

¶5. (C) Asked about the effect of the U.S. return to UNESCO, DG Matsuura said that most important of the many positive elements is the boost in literacy programs, again mentioning how Mrs. Bush had greatly improved UNESCO's visibility on the subject. Matsuura said that it would be "ridiculous" to imagine that UNESCO could move forward on the key issues it is dealing with without the help of the United States.

¶6. (C) Turning to Jerusalem's Mughrabi Gate issue, the DG said that clearly all decisions at UNESCO on this sensitive topic must be taken unanimously. The DG said that he was not pessimistic, and believes that ultimately it can be worked out. He added that it is a technical issue that must be handled by experts. Matsuura noted that before his arrival at UNESO, Executive Board decisions on the subject were made unilaterally and were, therefore, not implementable. Matsuura said that if Member States are serious about the decisions they take, they must be willing to make special efforts to reach consensus. The DG said that while it is his duty to implement decisions, he needs the cooperation of key parties to do so.

¶7. (C) When asked about the future of UNESCO, Matsuura said it is still "too early" to make a judgment or forecast. He said that Member States must be vigilant. Much more must be done to make the organization more efficient, but Matsuura added that he does not want to see a retreat from what has been accomplished. In response, A/S Hook said that the DG position has always been significant, adding that we will be looking to find strong leadership to replace him.

¶8. (C) A/S Hook ended the meeting by raising the issue of American employment at UNESCO. The DG said that currently there are 36 Americans at UNESCO, but, despite the recent departure of Deputy Assistant Director General for External Affairs, the number is steadily increasing, though he admitted that today, the U.S. is not well represented at the senior levels. The DG mentioned that several

positions, including two D-Level jobs in the Education Sector would be posted soon, and asked that we put forward strong candidates.

OLIVER